

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES—Wednesday, June 7, 2000

The House met at 10 a.m.

The Chaplain, the Reverend Daniel P. Coughlin, offered the following prayer:

Lord, You have said:

“Whoever believes shall not be put to shame.”

Strengthen us in faith, O Lord.

May we hold in high value the faith of Your people.

May the laws of this land and the concerns of this Chamber protect and never diminish the free exercise of the faith of this Nation.

Make us steadfast in addressing doubt and confusion.

Give us compassion so as to guide those who are weak in their convictions.

Form out of us a haven for those who lose hope because of injustice.

Lord, may we be creative in restoring hope, persistent in making right judgments, and persevering in speaking the truth.

For You are the perfecter of our faith now and forever. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. HUTCHINSON) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. HUTCHINSON led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Mr. Lundregan, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed bills of the following titles in which concurrence of the House is requested:

S. 1419. An act to amend title 36, United States Code, to designate May as “National Military Appreciation Month”.

S. 2311. An act to revise and extend the Ryan White CARE Act programs under title XXVI of the Public Health Service Act, to improve access to health care and the quality of care under such programs, and to provide for the development of increased capacity to provide health care and related support services to individuals and families with HIV disease, and for other purposes.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BARRETT of Nebraska). The Chair will entertain 1 minute requests.

DEATH TAX SHOULD BE REPEALED

(Mr. GIBBONS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GIBBONS. Mr. Speaker, Woody Allen once said that “death should not be viewed as the end, but as a very effective way to cut down expenses.”

Well, unfortunately, this maxim just does not hold true. Currently, at the time of death, Americans are assessed an additional tax on the value of their property known as the death tax. This added expense is why over 70 percent of the family businesses do not survive to the second generation.

Mr. Speaker, it is simply shameful that the Federal Government requires an American to pay up to 60 percent of their savings, their businesses, or their farm in taxes when they die. Therefore, I encourage all of my colleagues to support H.R. 8 which will eliminate the unfair death tax over the next 10 years. Americans should not have to mourn the loss of a family, a business, or a farm in addition to the loss of a loved one.

It is time to bury the death tax once and for all.

MEDICARE TO COVER CLINICAL TRIALS

(Mr. BENTSEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BENTSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to praise President Clinton for acting today to ensure that senior citizens have access to clinical trials identical to legislation, H.R. 61, which I have sponsored.

The President's Executive Order announced this morning will ensure that Medicare will cover the routine costs associated with clinical trials. This action is long overdue and will ensure that 39 million Medicare beneficiaries get access to cutting-edge treatments which save lives.

Clinical trials are research projects which test new therapies and treatments. It is especially significant that this initiative ensures access to all types of clinical trials, not just cancer, in the same manner as my legislation would.

Under current law, Medicare does not provide coverage for routine patient costs associated with clinical trials. As a result, many senior citizens do not participate in these trials because they cannot afford to pay the out-of-pocket costs. Today, only 1 percent of senior citizens participate in clinical trials, yet seniors disproportionately face these diseases, such as cancer, Alzheimer's, heart disease, and diabetes.

This initiative is the right thing to do for our seniors. With more participation by seniors, researchers will discover treatments at a more rapid pace, because more participation will yield scientifically valid data to test the protocols being developed.

I praise the President for this action.

ELIMINATION OF DEATH TAX IS RIGHT FOR AMERICA

(Mr. HUTCHINSON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. HUTCHINSON. Mr. Speaker, Benjamin Franklin said that the only thing certain in life were death and taxes, but I do not even think Ben Franklin could have foreseen that death and taxes would eventually come hand in hand. Yet, for too many years, the death tax has been punishing Americans simply for dying.

Because of the death tax, many Americans are denied the opportunity to pass on their life's work to their children or grandchildren. This unfair tax is especially hard on small business owners and farmers. Nine out of 10 American businesses are owned by families, and these families should have the right to keep their business. In Arkansas, because of the death tax, many farmers and small business owners must take out expensive life insurance policies to help their families cope with the tax burden. Instead of enjoying their retirement years, these Arkansans must worry about the government taxing their family into the ground.

This week, the House will be voting on the Death Tax Elimination Act, a bill that is long overdue. Eliminating the death tax is the right thing to do for American families, American farmers, and American small business owners.

AMERICANS NEED AFFORDABLE, QUALITY DAY CARE

(Mrs. MALONEY of New York asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.